

SHA Membership Meeting
April 7, 2021
Zoom – COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Board of Trustee President and Declarations CEO Jim Marhold. Jim thanked everyone for registering. 55 people were electronically in attendance representing housing developers, supportive services providers, advocates, government representatives, corporate vendors and families. Jim reminded everyone that the minutes of the February meeting had been posted to the SHA website. Jim called for any objections to unanimous consent to approve the minutes. Hearing no objections minutes for 2/3/21 meeting minutes were approved.
2. Diane introduced Janel Winter, Director of Housing and Community Resources for the Department of Community Affairs to give an update.
 - Emergency Rental Assistance CV Rap 2 (COVID rental assistance program phase 2) open. Phase I served more than 15,000 households and put out more than \$91 million. In Phase II \$353 million is allocated to DCA and in addition DCA will manage Burlington and Morris county allocation which brings the total to over \$375 million. Pre-application portal is open so please encourage people to apply for rental arrears past, present or anticipated impact from COVID. Rolling lotteries will have applications open and they will pull pre-application and invite people to send in full applications. This week we pulled the first lottery pre-applications. The priority is people making 50% or less of AMI and those who have a household member who have been unemployed 90 days or longer. DCA priority is to pay off arrears and pay landlords as soon as possible. DCA has received more than 50,000 applications to date. Janel again reiterated the message people should apply even if they don't know if they are eligible. DCA will do the job of assessing. The initial pre application is very simple. And if people don't have internet access to can apply online, DCA is staffing a call center seven days a week from 8:30am to 8pm, and people can call with questions and/or DCA will take their pre application right over the phone. English and Spanish language is available as well as translation services for many other languages. We also anticipate additional

funds to become available from the American Rescue Plan Act and are awaiting guidance from US Treasury

See: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/cverap2.shtml> for more info.

- Please also reach out to small landlords and alert them to this program. DCA works with big landlords and the New Jersey Apartment Association, they're very interested in this program, and they have a lot of people a lot of tenants who will need it so that's great, but we don't want smaller landlords to be left out.
- Utility Assistance, DCA has paid off more than \$10 million in utility arrears for more than 15,000 households. This was made available through NJ's coronavirus funding. Those were funds that the governor made available from the States coronavirus relief funds. DCA was pro-active reaching to those who participate in LIHEAP and USF programs and had arrears and asked them to either go to a website or call us and just confirm that they experienced a COVID impact. The vast majority of our folks had an average payment of \$650 - \$700 but could be eligible for up to \$5,000 a household. Encourage new people to apply to LIHEAP and USF programs. Also new funds coming in from American Rescue Plan Act that will also be used for arrears.
 - HUD renewal Housing Choice section 8 program. This year we received more than \$25 million in additional new funds based on our utilization in the past year. Janel applauded the work of the field offices in getting people processed and paying rents on time given the difficult circumstances. The high utilization rate of the program afforded NJ the additional funds. At this point, that program is about \$275 million a year or about 24,000 households across the state.
 - National Housing Trust Fund NJ allocation this year will be more also at about almost \$24 million. That will help us really create a lot of new affordable housing which we absolutely need. And as you know, is really geared specifically at tenants who are at very low or extremely low incomes. So in many ways the tenants who usually don't make enough money to go into affordable housing without a subsidy. So, this is a great way to fill that gap and make sure that we pay attention to those really vulnerable households.
 - On the Homeless, Prevention and Homeless Services front, DCA COVID related rapid rehousing program had 1200 referrals taking them from COCs and directly from shelters. The benefit includes 12mos. Rent, security deposit and moving expenses. Our biggest

- challenge is finding rental units. Please make sure you alert DCA and field offices when you have available units.
- Questions – Will more vouchers become available for over 62? A successful strategy is applying for help temporarily so they have breathing room. Also DCA has pulled 62 over from SRAP waiting list so that may help. Hoping new programs from HUD will bring more opportunity. Both voucher programs wait lists time is down. Janel reminded everyone that NHTF projects are being paired with vouchers. AHTF - how much money is left in construction? Still have \$\$ not concerned there will be too many projects. We need to generate more projects in the pipeline. DCA is looking to help developers build up capacity and especially those who have not traditionally been at the table. Are there any plans to expand the small area zip code program? Not at this time because we have had to pay more for state portion of voucher as people have adjusted their reduction of income due to COVID.
3. **Diane introduced Steve Fishbein** steve.fishbein@dhs.nj.gov Deputy Assistant Director of Mental Health and Addiction Service (DMHAS) to give an update (Harry is on a vacation).
- 200 subsidies in new budget (obviously state budget will need to be passed for this to be realized) will go out through an RFP. These will be mostly for people moving out of state hospital and some for homeless. Details will be come at the appropriate time.
 - DHMAS FMR 2018 increase to 2020 rates is also in the budget.
 - Budget includes justice involved pilot program in two counties (TBD)
 - the Mental Health and Substance Abuse block grant includes COVID supplemental funding which the division submitted to SAMSA yesterday. This should be approved by July.
 - Questions – FMR update delay. This is challenging, DDD has upgraded payment standards to 2020 FMR. What is happening with re-visioning CSS? As state is updating Medicaid 1115 waiver, it may be a good time. No news yet. 200 additional subsidies will it include services \$ or just bricks and mortar. Likely just bricks and mortar.
4. **Diane Riley, SHA Executive Director highlights included:**
- Diane thanked everyone who have renewed. Current SHA members should have all received renewals by now. As a reminder, SHA moved everybody to January renewals, thanks to those who've been able to renew. If having any trouble at all in financing or challenges renewing, please reach out. We definitely want to work with you.

- Please put your names in the chat and email everyone will know who you are and can see the breath of our membership.
- Diane invited new members since our last meeting the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Ellen Nalven introduced PLANNJ whose specialty is life planning, with a focus on helping people to attain and maintain public benefits. Some of the services offered are special needs trust administration. PLANNJ has over 500 active accounts. Other services include guardianship (both DDD and Mental Illness), representative payee (small maxed out program), home visit monitoring and advocacy. This includes pro-active case management service to make sure that clients are happy and healthy and also advocacy so that housing arrangements are what people want. Whether that is group home or supervised apartment whatever the housing arrangement is. The life planning that we do with families really encompasses the entirety of human experience, medical, housing etc. which is extremely important.

- Garden State CDC Hudson County developer/service provider, Garden State Home in Highland Park works with youth aging out among other special needs populations, Fortitude Realty, Cherry Hill Development won a SHA project award with Pennrose last year.
- Diane introduced Kate Kelly kate.kelly@shanj.org to give an update on our Integrated Community Project. SHA was one of 18 agencies who received NJ Division of Disability Services (DDS) grant to provide guidance on Community Integration. The goal of the project is to increase the capacity of people with disabilities to become fully engaged in their communities. The project timeline is 18 months and will focus specifically on three counties: Bergen, Ocean and Camden. There are two ways to get involved: Through focus groups we will engage people with a variety of disabilities including physical, intellectual and developmental, mental health and substance abuse disorders and who experience homelessness or are elderly. These groups will help define aspects of community integration. The second way is to be part of one of our leadership teams made up of people with disabilities and staff of organizations that serve them. We will hold 6 focus groups (2 in each county). We are actively recruiting for June and July focus groups. We are asking for interested participants to fill out a brief survey in the next two weeks. Focus groups participants will receive a gift card for their participation.

We are also eager to connect with you to be part of our leadership team. Leadership Team will provide feedback and guidance throughout the project, assist with reviewing self-assessment for municipalities and other potential resources in the “toolbox”. We are also looking to connect to key staff at the county level. If you can help us in any way or would like info on any of these options please reach out to Kate.Kelly@shanj.org . See the presentation for info: <https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership-meetings/>

- Diane introduced Joseph Christensen, Member/Communication Manager for SHA to demo a new member tool SHA will be introducing next month. The new tool is not “live” yet but we hope this new tool will be a great new way to highlight our members and all they provide and enable not only our member community to connect but also connect with the wider community. The demonstration allowed for an alphabetical listing with general information and a thumbnail of contact info, the type of organization, population and services. The search feature enable search by geographic area, type of populations serviced, type of organization (i.e. housing developer, provider, financial institution, vendor etc.) or a combination of the three. An easy form will allow more information to be passed on to us in order to update our listing. This has been available in the past but you can also fill that out at any time here: <https://www.shanj.org/join-sha-2/> and send that on to Joseph j.christensen@shanj.org

Diane reminded everyone that Amy Scartocci from DDD could not be with us but she will be at the next meeting. Diane is meeting with her next week so if you are experiences any issues please let Diane know. Finally Diane thanked the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities for an extension of our Housing Navigator Grant. We will be providing three additional training sessions as well as invite our original graduates to join a collaborative for ease of networking.

5. Arnold Cohen, Senior Policy Analyst from Housing Community Development Network of NJ HCDNNJ acohen@hcdnnj.org gave an update. There is a lot happening on the federal level. As you know the last COVID relief bill was \$1.9 trillion. Various counties are rolling out their rental assistance programs. There is money in there to address long and short term homelessness. There's money there potentially to buy up hotels or other property to make it into permanent affordable housing. In the proposed infrastructure bill

housing is a critical piece with about \$200 billion. HCDNNJ is pushing with our partners \$75 billion to address, public housing, because really that's the only place for people with extremely low income, to be able to be safely housed. The other big infusion we are looking for is \$40 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF). NHTF was first signed into law by President Bush, and it is expressly to address the housing needs of very low income people earning below 30% of the average median income. And if we're able to get \$40 billion into the NHTF, it will go a long way in terms of helping to end homelessness and meet the needs of people with disabilities who are often living on fixed income and extremely low income. This is a once in a generation opportunity to be able to address some of these long term housing issues. The network is working with the National Low Income Housing Coalition, on the HoUsed campaign. There are four planks to the campaign. 1) A move towards universal vouchers for every person who qualifies my income to get housing assistance. This would move toward how SNAP works, an entitlement program where everyone who is eligible would receive assistance. 2) Expand the housing stock available to very low income people with an infusion of \$\$ to the NHTF 3) National Emergency Rental Assistance Program. This program would help people who have an emergency, an illness, job loss etc. to also not lose their home. We have some state programs but we need the federal government, to be able to help make the program work. Finally 4) is rental rights, making sure that people who are renting which is usually lower income folks actually have rights. And as we see now, we see these people being legally evicted. People are not getting the basics. We recently has a federal legislative day and SHA joined us on a number of calls. SHA also emphasized the LIHTC improvements as per our discussion last meeting. Enterprise district data was critically important. Question: When is the new HCDNNJ eviction program going live? This Friday HCDNNJ member call will discuss and officially launch the new program on Monday. This should be a great help to rentals facing eviction challenges.

6. Diane introduced our main presentation speakers:

Kerry-Anne Henry, LSW, *Supervisory Program Lead, NJ Dept. of Children and Families Office of Strategic Development*,

KerryAnne.Henry@dcf.nj.gov

Chelsea Fisher, *Program Coordinator, Ocean Mental Health Services*

KFT Program in Ocean County, cfisher@oceanmhs.org

The topic is the Keeping Family Together program (KFT). KFT Program is a supportive housing model designed to prevent child maltreatment and family separation and reduce child welfare involvement among high-needs families. Once a pilot this is now a statewide program. The program was first piloted in 2014 in Essex. DCF prevention and reinvention working with families in child welfare. DCF works with state child welfare or child protection and permanency (CP&P). KFT sits within the office of strategic development – modernizing making sure service array really meets the needs of children and families.

The presentation had three major segments:

- 1) Key Components of NJ's Keeping Families Together Program
- 2) Cross-System Connections: Strategies and Key Considerations for facilitating NJ KFT
- 3) Lessons Learned and Successes

Supportive Housing in Child Welfare among at-risk adults:

- Increases housing stability
- Improves mental and physical health
- Reduces substance use
- Decreases costs to public services such as emergency rooms, shelters and jails

KFT targets frequently encountered families. KFT is an attempt to get to the root problems. Goal is to increase housing stability for families to reduce return to the child welfare system.

What does it take? Collaboration, CSH, DMHAS, Housing Developers, DCA, HMFA, provider agencies. Pilot grew from 10 to service 623 families in 2018 (over 1,500 children). 8 provider agencies serve all 21 counties.

How are families identified? Families are referred solely through child welfare offices. Families must be involved, indicator for homelessness or housing instability, and co-occurring challenge (mental health or substance abuse, learning of physical disabilities etc., child under 6).

What services are included? Vouchers or LIHTC units, services include: Case Management, Parenting Coaching/Life Skills, Substance Use, Mental Health, Employment, Transportation, Concrete Support

(limited financial).

Question: No official waitlist? CP&P partner would refer.

Program is successful using this strategy:

- Active use of strategies to support the adoption of the program
- Active installation of supports for the implementation of the program
- Implementation Teams are structured and accountable

Chelsea Fisher joined the conversation. She gave a practical view of the work in Ocean County. Ocean County Mental Health (OCMH) uses housing first model. 40 tenant based vouchers. Team includes: program coordinator, nurse practitioner, 2 clinicians, housing specialist, peer advocate, case workers, employment counselor etc. Families are screened CP&P and then OCMH conferences to discuss. OCMH schedules an intake and takes considerable time looking at current compliance and other factors that may indicate potential success. Housing application begins immediately.

Care is taken to look at where families want to live and factors such as schools, work etc. OCMH has been working in supportive housing since 1999 and has good relationships with landlords.

Individual and family counseling, utilizing evidence based interventions, dedicated staff.

KFT spans silos to make all the pieces come together.

KFT is looking to expand partnerships. Please get in touch.

Presentations can be found:

<https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership-meetings/>

The meeting concluded at 12:05 pm. Advocacy Committee meeting followed. Next meeting of the SHA membership is scheduled for Wed. June 2, 2021. Developers Meeting will be May 10th.

Submitted by Diane Riley, Executive Director